

FOOTWEAR

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to footwear and particularly to new and improved footwear providing the wearing experience of sandals while fully enclosing the foot.

Background of the Invention

Sandals are conventionally comprised of a sole and one or more straps or the like for strapping or holding the sole on the wearer's foot. Sandals provide an unparalleled walking experience, provide a very high degree of comfort and are in great demand. However, there are social occasions for which sandals are inappropriate. Also, when wearing sandals, the foot is largely exposed. Consequently, sandals are generally unsuitable for use in cold and inclement weather.

Summary of the Invention

The object of the invention is to provide new and improved footwear providing the wearing experience, sensation and comfort of sandals while at the same time providing for full enclosure of the foot.

In accordance with the invention, the sole and upper of the footwear each have a front portion extending from approximately the ball of the foot forward to the toes of the foot and a back portion extending from approximately the ball of the foot rearward to the heel of the foot. The front portion of the upper is affixed to the front

portion of the sole and either alone or in combination or in conjunction with the sole provides an enclosure for the front portion of the foot. The rear portion of the upper is not affixed to the sole, but rather is free of and moveable relative to the sole, and provides an enclosure for the back portion of the foot. Because the back or heel portion of the upper is not affixed to the sole, the upper is free to flex without requiring the sole to flex.

The result is the same unparalleled walking comfort one achieves wearing sandals while instead wearing full foot enclosing footwear. Thus, the wearing comfort of sandals maybe incorporated in footwear for any and all occasions, e.g., dress shoes, loafers, sport shoes, beach and boating shoes, walking shoes, boots, etc.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those of reasonable skill in the art from the following detailed description as considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a side elevation of a preferred embodiment of the footwear of the invention showing the footwear in an at rest or flat foot position;

Fig. 2 is a side elevation of the footwear illustrated in Fig. 1 showing the same in a flexed or walking position; and

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the footwear illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2 indicating in dotted lines one mode of securing the front portion of the upper to the front portion of the sole.

Detailed Description of a Preferred Embodiment

The following is a detailed description of one embodiment of the invention presently contemplated by the inventor to be the best mode of carrying out his invention.

Referring to the drawings, the footwear 10 of the invention is comprised of a sole 12 and an upper 14, which is generally coextensive in length and width with the sole 12. The sole maybe comprised of any suitable footwear sole material known in the art, e.g., leather, imitation leather, rubber, various plastics and composites, etc., and may have any customary earth engaging surface, e.g., smooth, textured, nonskid, ribbed, all terrain, etc. The upper may similarly be comprised of any suitable footwear upper material, e.g., leather, imitation leather, hides or skins, plastic, fabric, etc.,

The style, shape and appearance of the footwear may take on any style, shape or appearance conventional in the footwear art for fully enclosed footwear, i.e., it may be a dress shoe, a loafer, a sport shoe, a walking shoe, a boating shoe, an ankle boot, a high top boot, etc.

The sole 12 and upper 14 each have a front portion 16 extending from approximately the ball of the foot forward beyond the toes of the foot and a back portion 18 extending from approximately the ball of the foot rearward to the rear surface of the heel of the foot.

The front portion 16 of the upper may be formed to fully encompass the front portion of the foot, or it may be soleless in which case the front portion of the

upper in conjunction with the front portion of the sole serve to encompass the front portion of the foot.

The front portions of the upper and the sole may be secured together by any mode of construction conventional in the footwear art, e.g., stitching, stapling, or gluing, or a combination thereof. In any event, the portions of the sole and the lower extremities of the upper that are encompassed within the dotted stitch line 20 in Fig. 3 are securely affixed to one another.

The rear portion 18 of the upper is formed to fully encompass the rear portion and heel of the foot. It may be formed integral with the front portion of the upper or it may be secured at its forward margins to the rear margins of the front portions of the upper and the sole. In any event, the structure is such that the foot is fully enclosed within the front portions of the upper and the sole and the back portion of the upper.

The back portion 18 of the upper 14 is not attached to the sole 12. Rather, it is free from the sole and free to move in a pivotal arc relative to the sole as depicted in Fig. 2. Consequently, the upper 14 can flex relative to the sole without requiring the sole to flex. Thus, the comfort and enjoyment of wearing sandals may in accordance with the invention be imparted to any style of footwear.

The objects and advantages of the invention have thus been shown to be attained in a convenient, practical, economical and facile manner.

While a preferred embodiment of the invention has been herein illustrated and described, it is to be appreciated that the various changes,

rearrangements and modifications maybe made therein without departing from the scope of the invention, as defined by the appended claims.